

AN ANALYSIS OF A PERFORMANCE BY ‘ALĪ MAḤMŪD AND SĀMĪ A-SH-SHAWWĀ

Amine Beyhom*

INTRODUCTION¹

Yā Nasīm a-ṣ-Ṣabā is a *qaṣīda*² – some say a *muwashshah*³ – which is best known to musicians through the performance of ‘Alī Maḥmūd and violinist Sāmī a-sh-Shawwā on the 1927 ODEON recording. Unique due to the mastery in the handling of different *maqām*(s) in modulation by Maḥmūd, it also features a traditional exercise of “translation” (*tarjama*) in which the singer (Maḥmūd) initiates a melodic phrase which is reproduced and partly revisited by the violinist (a-sh-Shawwā).

* Amine Beyhom is Chief Editor of NEMO-Online and director of the CERMAA (Centre de Recherche sur les Musiques Arabes et Apparentées), a research center affiliated to the FOREDOFICO foundation in Lebanon. The author wishes to express his heartfelt thanks to CERMAA members Rosy Beyhom and Saad Saab – who also happens to be the president of FOREDOFICO – who not only helped analyzing this unique performance, but took also an active part in the deciphering and the translation of the lyrics.

¹ This article is a sequel to the dossier “MAT for the VIAMAP” published in NEMO-Online on November 2018. A few video-analyses of the VIAMAP (Video-Animated Music Analysis Project) series were published separately – since the publication of the dossier – on the website of the CERMAA, namely: of “Paotred er gueù à bleuigner” performed (2003) by Jorj Botuha at <http://foredofico.org/CERMAA/archives/1167> [Beyhom and CERMAA, 2018a], of “Greis mad pier gali galan” by the same at <http://foredofico.org/CERMAA/archives/1198> [Beyhom and CERMAA, 2018b], of an improvisation on ‘ūd in *maqām* Ṣabā by Hamdi Makhlouf at <http://foredofico.org/CERMAA/archives/1238> [Beyhom and CERMAA, 2018c], of “Akh tagorye h’ashyrie” (Syriac Orthodox Chant) performed by Evelyne Daoud at <http://foredofico.org/CERMAA/archives/1273> [Beyhom and CERMAA, 2019a], and two 3D analyses of Hurrian Song No. 6 – <http://foredofico.org/CERMAA/archives/1433> [Beyhom and CERMAA, 2019b] – and of a *Huseynî Taksim* performed by Neyzen Tefvik at <http://foredofico.org/CERMAA/archives/1386> [Beyhom and

This means that in such a procedure, and at some key points of the interpretation, and while Maḥmūd generally leads the *sayr al-‘amal* (or “melodic progression”), a-sh-Shawwā may hint to a particular modulation that Maḥmūd would further explore in his next phrase. While this translates above all into a cooperation and an emulation between the two performers, and while Maḥmūd’s performance seems to be thoroughly – at least partially – considered, it should be nonetheless clear to the listener, after this analysis, that part of it is improvised and constitutes an interactive discussion – and emulation – between the two participants.

Many difficulties arose in the process of the analysis, concerning the music as such, the lyrics and their interpretation, the recording – in very bad shape –, and the fact that graphic analysis is not suitable – still today – for the analysis of overlapping parts. All these difficulties were answered, but, once again, the most important one was the analysis of the progress of the melody, and of the modulations that structure it.

The performance is historical, very rare, and establishes a unique example of the art of the *maqām* at the highest level. The fact that it took place just before the

CERMAA, 2019b]. While these featured additional techniques for the analysis – partly used for the current analysis – none has necessitated as much time, details in the analysis, and research as this one – were it upstream or downstream.

² A *qaṣīda* is, according to <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/qaṣīda> – accessed 19/05/29, “[a] classical Arabic or Persian monorhyme poem in uniform meter, consisting of ten or more distiches set in a usually tripartite episodic structure, frequently with a panegyric or elegiac theme”.

³ According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (<https://www.britannica.com/art/muwashshah>), “*Muwashshah*, (Arabic: ‘ode’), an Arabic poetic genre in strophic form developed in Muslim Spain in the 11th and 12th centuries. From the 12th century onward, its use spread to North Africa and the Muslim Middle East. The *muwashshah* is written in Classical Arabic, and its subjects are those of Classical Arabic poetry—love, wine, court figures. It sharply differs in form, however, from classical poetry, in which each verse is divided into two metric halves and a single rhyme recurs at the end of each verse. The *muwashshah* is usually divided into five strophes, or stanzas, each numbering four, five, or six lines.” As we shall see, *Yā Nasīm A-ṣ-Ṣabā* is a *qaṣīda* used partially for the performance (5 verses), but has the form of classical poetry, namely “in which each verse is divided into two metric halves and a single rhyme recurs at the end of each verse”.

1932 *Congrès du Caire* gives us the possibility to compare the “findings” of the conference with actual music at that time.⁴

I. ABOUT THE PERFORMERS AND THE QAṢĪDA

Both performers were well-known in the *Nahḍāʿ* period and renowned for their mastery of the art of *maqām*. The main difference lies in the fact that ‘Alī Maḥmūd was a religious sheikh – and a Muslim – while Shawwā was a – Christian – layman.

Shaykh ‘Alī Maḥmūd⁶



Fig. 1 Photo of Shaykh ‘Alī Maḥmūd (1): origin and date unknown.

As already explained in the dossier “MAT for the VIAMAP”,⁷ Shaykh ‘Alī Maḥmūd was a blind *qārī* (reader of the Koran) of great renown, born in 1878 in Cairo.

His celebrity as a *muṭrib* (profane singer) and a *munshid* (religious singer – cantor) can be ascribed to his very complete background in music and Koranic studies, however also to the fact that he was extremely gifted. He had many students some of which became well known such as shaykh Zakariyya Aḥmad, Muḥammad Abd al-Wahhab, Um Kulthūm and Asmahān. He died on the 21st of December 1946 leaving few recordings after him.⁸

Sāmī a-sh-Shawwā



Fig. 2 Photograph of violinist Sāmī a-sh-Shawwā: origin and date unknown.

“Sāmī a-sh-Shawwā was born in Cairo to an Orthodox family from Aleppo [...]. His great grandfather Joseph was a violinist at the beginning of the eighteenth century and founded a *takht*⁹ he called the ‘noubat Shawwa’ with his brothers Antoine (violin), Abbūd (‘ūd), Habib (*tabla*) and his son Eliās (*qānūn*) who was Sāmī’s grandfather. [...] [Sāmī] quickly rose to fame in Aleppo and became known as a musical miracle. As soon as he became fourteen years old, his father sent him to Egypt where he mesmerized audiences supported by senior musicians who were friends of his father. [...] Shawwā maintained strong relationships with many intellectuals and literary figures in Egypt [...]. [His] advanced knowledge of Arabi[an] and Iraqi music, allowed him to play an important role in planning and preparing for the Arab Music Conference held in 1932. Specifically, he participated in the committee of the musical scale, which began its preparatory work in 1929 and contributed significantly to the activities of the conference and its theoretical discussions. With the shift of modes of music production in Egypt during the mid-thirties of the twentieth century towards modernization and Westernization that were led by [Muḥammad] Abd al-Wahhab dominating the music scene and replacing previous idioms, Shawwā was no longer able to maintain his previous musical position and influence. [...] [He] died in Cairo on the twenty-third of December 1965, leaving a legacy of important recordings that reflect [the] prestigious standing that he built, after his father, for the Arab[ian] Violin”.¹⁰

⁴ Neither of the two performers was recorded for the *Congrès du Caire*. Shawwā was however one of the participants (see below).

⁵ The Arabian “Renaissance” of the beginning of the 20th century.

⁶ See also, in the VIAMAP series, the video-analysis of *Aḥlān bi-Ghazālīn* performed by sheikh ‘Alī Maḥmūd (uploaded 09/10/2018): https://youtu.be/s_Nsm4mzFns.

⁷ [Beyhom, 2018, p. 195]; what follows is a shortened version.

⁸ See also “الشيخ علي محمود الصفحة 6 منتدى سماعي للطرب العربي الأصلي” – in Arabic, accessed May 24, 2019, <https://www.sama3y.net/forum/>.

showthread.php?p=629077 for a most complete biography – evidently in Arabic – of this performer.

⁹ The *takht* is equivalent to a small chamber orchestra for *maqām* music, limited to four or five musicians with, usually, a lead singer.

¹⁰ From <http://www.amar-foundation.org/sami-al-shawwa/> – accessed 19/05/29. Transliteration of Arabian names is adapted to the norms of NEMO-Online (See also a most complete biography – in Arabic – of this performer at https://arz.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=سامي_الشوا&oldid=776474, accessed 19/05/29.)

The qaṣīda

Yā Nasīm-a-ṣ-Ṣabā was recorded by ODEON in 1927 (see the internal cover of the black disk in Fig. 3) and is one of the most refined art works in *maqām* music and features multiple modulations within the general frame of *maqām Hījāz*.



Fig. 3 The original black disk (copy) of the *qaṣīda* Yā Nasīm-a-ṣ-Ṣabā performed by ‘Alī Maḥmūd & Sāmī A-sh-Shawwā with the recording number and date of publication (1927).

The origin of the *qaṣīda* – the lyrics – as such is disputed. While most attribute it to the *shaykh* Maḥmūd ibn ‘Abdullāh a-sh-Shahhāl,¹¹ one of the sources we could find attributes it – or part of it – to Niqūlawūs (Nicolas) a-ṣ-Ṣā’igh (1756-1692 (نيقولاوس الصانع) – Fig. 5 – who was the head the Catholic monks of the Saint-John convent (دير مار يوحنا الصانغ الشوير) of Shweir in Mount-Lebanon (Fig. 4).¹²



Fig. 4 Overview of the convent Saint-John in Khonchara (Khunshāra) – Lebanon.¹³

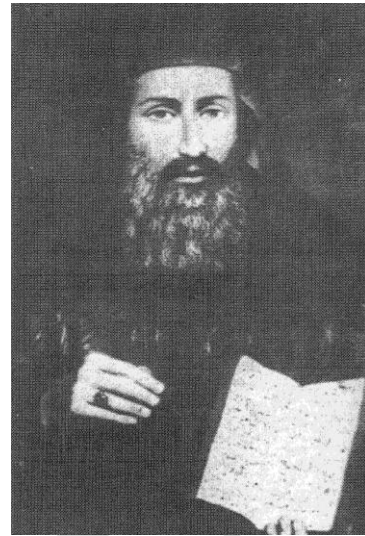


Fig. 5 Portrait of Fr. Niqūlawūs a-ṣ-Ṣā’igh painted by Abd-al-Lāh Zākhir.¹⁴

A further research led me to the Saint-John monastery, enquiring by Fr. Būlus (Paul) Nazha – former abbot and actual supervisor of the archives – who happened to be the editor of a booklet about a-ṣ-Ṣā’igh (Fig. 6).¹⁵

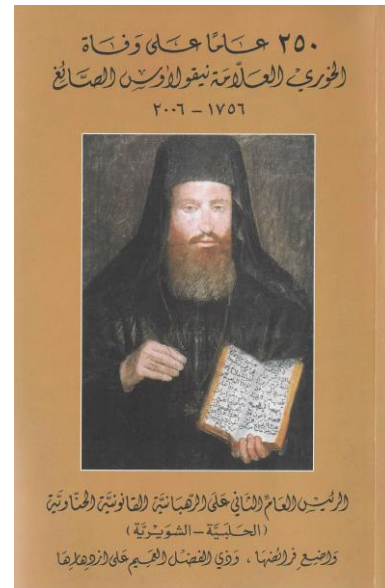


Fig. 6 Front cover of [Karam, 2007] with a portrait of Abd-al-Lāh Zākhir.¹⁶

¹¹ See for example <https://ma3azef.com/-/الشيخ-علي-محمود-منشد-الطير-السنارح>, accessed 19/05/29.

¹² See <https://rakhawy.net/153-قراء-في-كرك-اسات-التدري-ب-نجيب-محفوظ-وصف>, accessed 19/05/29.

¹³ From [Karam, 2007, p. 18].

¹⁴ From [Karam, 2007, p. 7].

¹⁵ I would like to express here my heartfelt thanks to Fr. Makarios Haidamous – of the Convent *Dayr al Mukhallis* (“The Savior”) in Joun (South-Lebanon) and with whom we collaborated a few years

ago for my research on Byzantine chant – for recommending me to Fr. Nazha.

¹⁶ The booklet – as a matter of fact an extended article – is entitled “[Commemoration of] 250 years after the death of the priest and scientist [‘allāma] Niqūlawūs a-ṣ-Ṣā’igh”. As for Abd-al-Lāh Zākhir, he was a *shammās* (deacon) in the Saint-John convent at the time, and is known to have established in it the first printing press with Arabic letters in the Arab world. The original portrait of Zākhir is kept at the monastery and is 60 × 42 cm.

Fr. Nazha ensured that Fr. a-ṣ-Ṣā'igh effectively composed such a *qaṣīda* and showed me the 6th edition of the *dīwān* (collection of poems) written by this poet (Fig. 7), including the *qaṣīda* *Yā Nasīma-ṣ-Ṣabā* (Fig. 8).

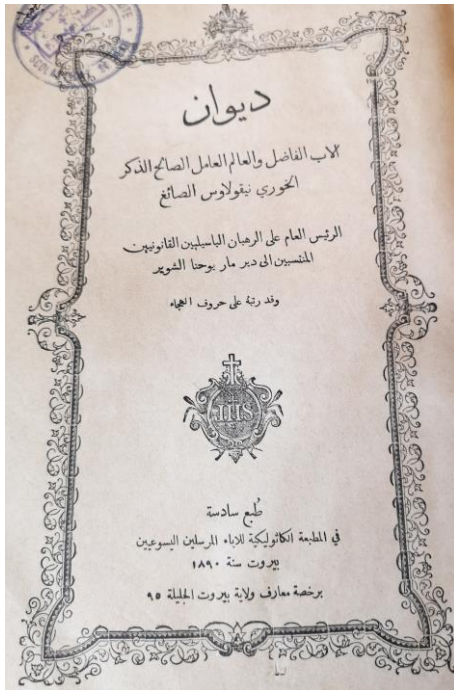


Fig. 7 Front page of the 6th edition of the *Dīwān al-Abb al-Fādīl wa-l-'īm a-ṣ-Ṣā'igh a-dh-Dhikr al-Khūrī Niqūlawūs a-ṣ-Ṣā'igh* dated 1890, printed by the Catholic Press of the Jesuit Missionaries in Beirut.

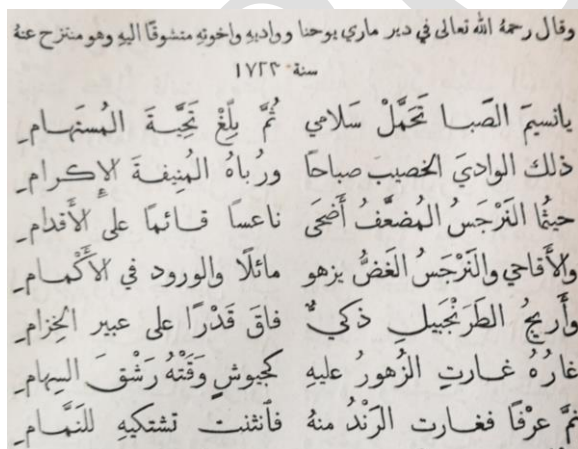


Fig. 8 The beginning of the *qaṣīda* *Yā Nasīm a-ṣ-Ṣabā* by Niqūlawūs a-ṣ-Ṣā'igh¹⁷ – dated 1723.

However, and while the incipit – the first distich – of the *qaṣīda* composed by Nicolas is identical to

the incipit of the *qaṣīda* performed by 'Alī Maḥmūd (يا نسيم الصبا تحمّل سلامي or *Yā nasīma-ṣ-ṣabā taḥammal salāmī* – the lyrics are provided in Fig. 9 and below), the remaining part is different while still based on the same meter and rhyme¹⁸.

It is nonetheless somewhat intriguing that the second distich of the first verse by a-ṣ-Ṣā'igh (Fig. 8) – *thumma balligh taḥiyyat al-mustahāmī* – be partly integrated in the first distich of the second verse of the version by a-sh-Shahhāl – *thumma ballighumu taḥāyā muḥibbin* (Fig. 9), with very close meanings for the two distiches.

While searching further for the original of Maḥmūd's interpretation, namely for a-sh-Shahhāl, we¹⁹ could find the first edition of his *dīwān* (collection of poems) in a first edition dated 1894 (Fig. 10), i.e. only four years after the 6th edition of the *dīwān* of Ṣā'igh, and printed in what seems to be the home town of Shahhāl, Tripoli in Lebanon.

The version included in this last compendium, while slightly different from Maḥmūd's interpretation (Fig. 9 and Fig. 11), is however clearly the source of his performance – and has the same exact second verse.

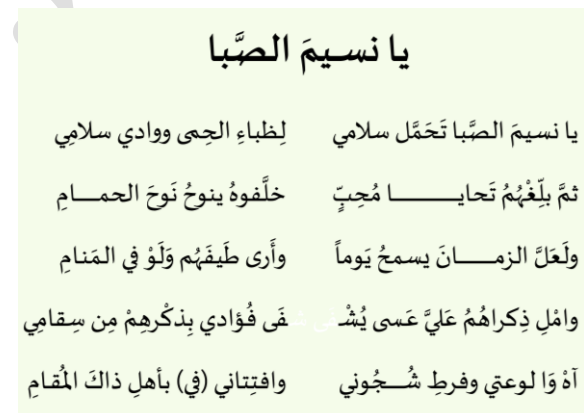


Fig. 9 Lyrics of *Yā Nasīm a-ṣ-Ṣabā* as transcribed from the performance of 'Alī Maḥmūd: in the last line, second distich and between brackets, is one word (*fī* = "in") which was replaced by "bī" (with a similar meaning) in the sung performance.²⁰

¹⁷ [a-ṣ-Ṣā'igh, 1890, p. 235].

¹⁸ The ending of each verse is, in both poems, with the letter "m" (*qaṣīda mīmīyya*).

¹⁹ At the CERMAA, namely Rosy Beyhom.

²⁰ In the original version (see Fig. 11), the third and the fourth verses are in the inverse order.



Fig. 10 Front page of the *Dīwān 'Aqd al-Lāl min Naẓm a-sh-Shahhāl* by *Shaykh Maḥmūd a-sh-Shahhāl a-ṭ-Tarābulusi* (from Tripoli - Lebanon – or *Tarābulus a-sh-Shām* in the Arabic original), published 1894 CE (1312 H) by Maṭba'at al-Balāgha in the same town.²¹

Fr. Boulos Nazha explained,²² however, that while the first expression in the first distich of the *qāṣida* – i.e. *Yā Nasīm a-ṣ-Ṣabā*²³ – is common in the literature, notably poetic, the complete distich – *Yā Nasīm a-ṣ-Ṣabā taḥammal Salāmi*²⁴ – is much less common, and specified that he knew of no other example of the use of such a distich, be it in poetry or in prose, except in the *qāṣida* performed by 'Alī Maḥmūd that I had just submitted to him.

It became then clear that a more thorough discussion of dates was necessary: by consulting the catalogue

“Khalifé”²⁵ of the *Bibliothèque Orientale* of the (Catholic) Université Saint-Joseph in Beirut (run by the Jesuits), we found a mention of the *dīwān* of Ṣā'igh under No. 1470 (Fig. 12) specifying that the first edition of the manuscript of the *dīwān* of Ṣā'igh took place in 1859, which is 35 years before the publication of the *dīwān* of Shahhāl.²⁶

وقال حسب امكانه في مديح سيد البشر حضرة المصطفى
صلى الله عليه وسلم وشرف وكرم

يانسيم الصبا تحمل سلامي
ثم بلغهم تحايا محب
واملي ذكراهم علي عسى يش
ولعل الزمان يسبح يوما
يا خليي عرجا بي الى وا
وقفا بي علي الطلول وقولا
فاسمحو بالوصال منكم لمضى
آه والوعتي وفرط شجوني
لظباء الحمى ووادي سلامي
خلفوه بنوح نوح الحمام
في فؤادي بذكرهم من سقامي
وارى طيفهم ولو في المنام
دي زرود لنحو تلك الحيام
صبكم قد عناه فرط الغرام
ذي اكتئاب في جبكم مستهام
وافتاني في اهل ذاك المقام

Fig. 11 Detail from [a-sh-Shahhāl (a-ṭ-Tarābulusi), 1894, p. 6] reproducing the beginning of the *qāṣida* *Yā Nasīm a-ṣ-Ṣabā*, with the verses used by Maḥmūd delineated by green rounded rectangles. The 1st and 4th verses (pinpointed by a double arrow) are inverted in Maḥmūd's performance, and he uses – as explained in the legend of Fig. 9 – *bī* instead of *fī* in the last verse.

Knowing that the convent Saint-Jean in Khonchara is situated in the North-Metn region (mostly the mountain area, slightly to the North of Lebanon) while Tripoli is today considered the capital of North Lebanon, and knowing that poetry and prose circulated from and to Lebanon, from and to other Arabian countries in the Ottoman Empire – including Egypt,²⁷ and that there were frequent contacts between religious communities, at least on the cultural level (see Fig. 13), it becomes most probable that Tripolitan *shaykh* a-sh-Shahhāl was inspired by the *qāṣida* of the priest of Khonchara for his own *Yā Nasīm a-ṣ-Ṣabā* which was performed, partially and with minor changes, by 'Alī Maḥmūd in his 1927

²¹ [a-sh-Shahhāl (a-ṭ-Tarābulusi), 1894].

²² The interview took place in the convent Saint-John on May 28, 2019.

²³ This could be translated (see more explanations about the lyrics below) as “Oh Breeze of the East, bear my salutations”.

²⁴ This could be translated (see more explanations about the lyrics below) as “Oh Breeze of the East”.

²⁵ Available online at <https://bo.usj.edu.lb/pdf/khalife/Poesie.pdf>.

²⁶ The estimation of the time difference is approximate because of the differences between the (Solar) Western Christian calendar and the Islamic (*Hijrī* – Lunar) calendar.

²⁷ As specified by Fr. Boulos Nazha in the aforementioned interview.

recorded performance with Sāmī a-sh-Shawwā on violin.

1470

Papier ordinaire. — Reliure en cuir jaune foncé, gaufré, mal conservée. — Écriture naṣḥī. — Encre rouge et noire. — Le ms., dont un grand nombre de ff. sont détachés et qui est amputé de la fin, est paginé de 1 à 228. — 1 f. de garde au début et 1 seul à la fin. Hauteur: 216 mm.; largeur: 155 mm. — Surface écrite: 170×90 mm. — 24 lignes la page.
Probablement XIX^e s.

Niqūla as-SĀYIĞ († 1756) : ديوان الشوي. Nous avons ici le *diwān* incomplet du Supérieur général des religieux basiliens (ṣuairites). En voici l'incipit: ويبدأ بهذا ديوان الاب الفاضل والعالم العامل الصالح الذكر نيقلأوس صايغ الاب العام الرهبان القاسيلين القانونيين المكرمين المنتسبين الى دير ماري يوحنا الشوير القاطنين في بلاد الدروز... (Cf. *Echos d'Orient*, XI (1908) 71-76; 154-161. — *al-Maṣriq*, VI (1903) 97-111; IX (1906) 693; XXV (1927) 598-608; XXVIII (1930) 831-835; — Y. I. ad-Dibs, *Ta'rīḥ Sūriya*, VIII, 481. — L. Cheikho: *Sarḥ Mağānī 'l-'adab*, II (1888) 661, etc.).

Pour les copies de ce ms. cf. Graf, *op.l.*, III, p. 204.

Imprimé à l'Imprimerie catholique en 1859.

Fig. 12 Detail from [Anon. "Catalogue Khalifé des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Orientale", p. 105] giving information about the manuscript and the first edition of the *diwān* of Fr. Niqūlawūs a-ṣ-Ṣā'igh.

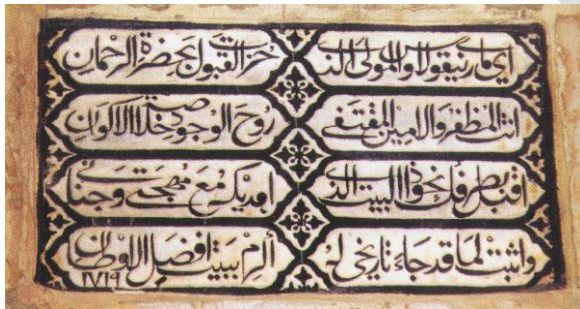


Fig. 13 An eulogy in form of a short poem celebrating the founding of the Saint-Nicolas church (patron of Niqūlawūs a-ṣ-Ṣā'igh who founded the church within the Saint-John convent in Khunshārā - Lebanon) in 1719. The similitudes between Islamic and Eastern Christian calligraphies are obvious.²⁸

TRANSCRIPTION AND transliteration OF THE LYRICS OF THE QĀṢĪDA

The transcription below – followed verse per verse by the corresponding transliteration – is undertaken from the actual lyrics of the recording (performance)

²⁸ Moreover: the last verse of this short poem is composed following numeric equivalences for word which add up to the date of the founding of the church (see [Karam, 2007, p. 11]). This is a procedure which is also used by Islamic sheikhs, notably in writings about music – for example in [‘Aṭṭāzādah, xix^e siècle (?)], which is an *urjuza* – a poem in the *rajaz* (corresponding to *mustafīlun* six times) prosodic meter – in form of a numeric puzzle, still not deciphered today.

²⁹ Maḥmūd pronounces some letters in the Egyptian art (for example “g” for “ج”=“g”) in Classical Arabic) and takes small liberties

and follows the classical pronunciation of the Arabic language.²⁹

يا نسيم الصَّبَا

يا نسيم الصَّبَا تَحَمَّلْ سَلامِي لِظَبَاءِ الجَمَى ووادي سَلامِي

Yā nasīma-ṣ-ṣabā taḥammal salāmi li-ṣ-ṣibā'i-l-ḥimā
wa-wādī salāmi

ثُمَّ بَلِّغُهُمْ تَحَايَا مُحِبِّ خَلْفُوهُ يَنُوحُ نُوْحَ الحَمَامِ

thumma ballighhumu taḥāyā muḥibbin khallafūhu
yanūḥu nawḥa-l-ḥamāmi

وَلَعَلَّ الزَمَانَ يَسْمُحُ يَوْمًا وَأَرَى طَيْفَهُمْ وَلَوْ فِي المَنَامِ

wa-la‘alla-z-zamān yasmaḥu yawman wa-‘arā ṭay-
fahum wa-law fī-l-manāmi

وَأُمِّلِ ذِكْرَهُمْ عَلَيَّ عَسَى يُثَقِّفَ قُودِي بِذِكْرِهِمْ مِنْ سِقَامِي

wa-amli dhikrāhumu ‘alayya ‘asā yushfā fu‘ādī bi-
dhikrihim min siqāmi

أَهْ وَآ لَوْ عَنِي وَفَرِطُ شُجُونِي وَافْتِنَانِي بِأَهْلِ ذَاكَ المَقَامِ

Āh wā law‘atī wa farṭi shujūnī wa-(i)ltizāmī bi-‘ahli
dhāka-l-muqāmi

TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE LYRICS TO ENGLISH

As is the case in general in – particularly – Arabic poetry, many interpretations are possible either for single words or for a distich or a verse, or even for portions of the poem relating to this or that social or political event.

For example, *a-ṣ-Ṣabā* bears different meanings,³⁰ mostly “the rise of the Eastern Winds”, but also, as *a-ṣ-Ṣibā* (with an “i”), “youth”, “childhood”, “inclination

with the vocalization in order to adapt the lyrics to the needs of the performance.

³⁰ Possible declinations of the meanings of the tri-letter root *ṣbā* of *a-ṣ-Ṣabā* are taken from an aggregator of Arabic dictionaries: [Anon. قاموس معالج: معنى و شرح الصبا في معجم عربي عربي أو قاموس عربي عربي وأفضل “تواميس اللغة العربية”, namely at <https://www.maajim.com/dictionary/الصبا/>.

[towards]”, with a possible concatenation of two meanings such as in the expression “والصَّبَا رِيحٌ تَسْتَقِيلُ الْبَيْتَ قَبْلَ لَأْتِهَا”³¹ which uses both the meanings of “wind” and “inclination towards”, not to mention that poets are allowed some liberty with the use of the language.³²

Consequently, the translation below – which is the result of a collective work³³ – is but one possible interpretation of the lyrics.³⁴

O Breeze of the East

O Breeze of the East, bear my salutations to the antelopes of the Keep and to the valley of (my) Peace

*Then pass on the regards of a lover they left behind
moaning like doves*

*Perhaps time will allow some day that I see them
emerging, if in my dreams*

*Arouse in me their remembrance, healing my heart
from its decay*

Oh! how deep are my sorrow, my grief and my inclination towards the people in that place

II. THE ANALYSIS

About the analysis with Praat

The analysis began on March 18, 2018 and continued since (till May 19, 2019, which is more than one year). Many difficulties arose when analyzing this recording:

- The available recording is in a very bad condition
- The intensity level of the violin is very low when compared to the intensity of the voice (predominant), which compelled us to boost the intensity of the violin whenever possible.

- Some overlapping segments between the two instruments (voice and violin) forced a manual analysis (evidently approximate) because of the impossibility, today, to separate these voices in an effective way: a further attempt at recreating a stereo separation was made, and the resulting audio reflects these attempts.
- Huge differences exist between the overall intensity of the melody and the intensities of the closing (and generally descending) formulae at the end of most phrases, which creates an additional difficulty in determining an optimal threshold for the intensity.

As a result, a compromise between accuracy and comprehensiveness had to be found, which ensued in some segments (especially the overlapping parts of the violin) being manually added on the graphics, and for missing bits of melody (lasting tenths of a second or less) to be complemented in order to reinstate the integrity of the melodic line. (Fig. 14 & Fig. 15)



Fig. 14 Example of manually added parts in the video-analysis of Yā Nasīm a-ṣ-Ṣabā. (See also Fig. 17)

³¹ “The Ṣabā is a wind which welcomes the house because it has an inclination towards it” – in [Manzūr (ibn), 1981, “Ṣabā”].

³² To which it is necessary to add that a-ṣ-Ṣabā is a well-known maqām which happens to have nothing in common with this particular interpretation of the qaṣīda.

³³ By Rosy and Amine Beyhom, with Saad Saab.

³⁴ As one other interpretation, Lebanese poet Ghassan Michel Abou Chedid, consulted (on May 31, 2019) by Saad Saab for the translation of this part of the qaṣīda, proposes:

“Oh Eastern breeze, bear my regards and heartfelt greetings to our young love(s) / Let them know of loving greetings left behind crying and moaning like a young dove / Maybe the passage of time will one day allow a view of their shadow even in dreams / Bestow their memories upon me, perhaps my recollection will heal my sickness / Oh loving pain full of worry and sadness with bewildered attachment of thy Folk”.

To complete the analysis, additional verifications were made with Rosy Beyhom reproducing particularly complex parts of the melody with a programmable workstation Roland EM-15 OR – tuned to 461.1 Hz and transposed -2 semi-tones (= 200 cents), which was a fair enough approximation of the overall tonic.

Further monitoring of the melody was undertaken by Saad Saab on *‘ūd*, and half- and third-tempo versions were produced to verify challenging parts of the performance and eventually refine the final analysis.



Fig. 15 Added part of the violin transposed one octave lower in the general view – Detail.

The literal analysis (reflected in the video and below) is *in fine* the result of thorough – and sometimes passionate – discussions over fine details of pitch, or of the adequacy of a scale, or even about the denomination of a *maqām* whenever a few may fit the same scale that was discussed, while sometimes on the same tonic.

About the graphic treatment (video assembling and editing)

This 48th video-analysis of the VIAMAP series lasted more than a year – including the preliminary research and analysis. It includes techniques already expounded

in [Beyhom, 2018], as well as a set of new techniques and added information about the recording and the music that is analyzed.

As a short reminder, the analyses of the VIAMAP series are animated with moving graphs and (moving or) fixed cursors. The screen is divided (FHT 2) in two horizontal stripes with the upper stripe showing a large scale view of the graphic analysis, and the lower stripe shows a more detailed view depicting approximately one sixth of the time span in the upper view.

In the upper view, the cursor moves from the left to the right synchronously with the music (and with the upper graphic which moves synchronously from right to left), while in the lower view, the – Central – cursor is fixed while the graphic moves steadily – and synchronously with the music – from right to left.

The color code for graphic scales used by the author for previous analyses³⁵ is used as a standard procedure, in the upper stripe and adapted to the lower stripe³⁶. As for previous analyses and in the general view, the graphic scale moves – slightly – vertically to better approximate the tonic of the singer; the tonic of the violin is stable.

As for the complementary techniques, these include the implementation of the intensity of the instruments as a brownish light line (Fig. 18 & Fig. 20),³⁷ a two-octaves main scale (Fig. 19) in the lower stripe, a near three-octaves scale in the upper stripe (Fig. 16), and the aforementioned reconstructions of missing bits or overlapped parts of the melody.

While two previous videos³⁸ used 3D techniques, the current video is in 2D, due to the accrued complexity of this interpretation, with frequent changes of scales and ample vertical movements of the pitch. Two instruments are analyzed – sometimes simultaneously – and differentiated by color – blue for the voice, green for the

³⁵ Red lines for the tonic and its octave, Green for the fourth and Blue for the fifth.

³⁶ The graphic scales in the lower stripe follow the same code color, but with *rā* = *c* being the tonic (red line) whatever the ongoing *maqām* is. This is kept unchanged from one analysis to the other for the sake of continuity, on one side, and within the same performance, on the other side, because changing the colors of the graphic scale with the changes of tonic would (1) have a disturbing effect on the viewer – because of a possible loss of visual bearings – and

(2) because this would require a considerable amount of supplementary editing.

³⁷ This also became a standard procedure beginning with the 42nd analysis of the VIAMAP series, of (aforementioned) *Paotred er guei à bleuigner* performed by Jorj Botuha (<http://foredo-fico.org/CERMAA/archives/1167>).

³⁸ Aforementioned analyses of Hurrian Song No. 6 – <http://foredo-fico.org/CERMAA/archives/1433> – and of a *Huseynî Taksim* performed by Neyzen Tevfik at <http://foredo-fico.org/CERMAA/archives/1386>.

violin – with the intensity shown in light brown color. (Fig. 18 and Fig. 20)

Due to a technical limitation (the assembling of very wide graphics in high resolution – such as those used in this video – is limited by the memory of the computer and / or the program) the main graphic results had to be split in three different parts and reassembled and synchronized separately *and* with one-another.

The three parts used are:

- Part I: 29096x677 pixels, 1-142 s_a (analysis time)
- Part II: 29300x677 pixels, 142-285 s_a (analysis time)
- Part III: 26845x677 pixels, 285-416 s_a (analysis time)



Fig. 16 The near-three octaves graphic scale in the upper stripe.



Fig. 17 Transposition of the violin one octave down in the general (below) stripe. (Compare with Fig. 14)

In the general view stripe, the violin is transposed one octave lower (Fig. 17 and Fig. 18) in order to maximize the clarity of the graphic reproduction.

The video editing required the use of approximately 160 different graphic elements. 14 different graphic scales were used in the analysis, corresponding to no less than 30 different modulations – and a substantial

number of different *genē* (or *ajnās* = melodic formulation of a polychord) and *maqāmāt* (modes) – by ‘Alī Maḥmūd alone.

Furthermore, detailed explanations about the scale(s) and the solmization (Fig. 19) are provided in both the video and in FHT 1.



Fig. 18 Detail from a frame showing the transposition of the part of the violin (upper stripe) one octave lower in the bottom stripe.

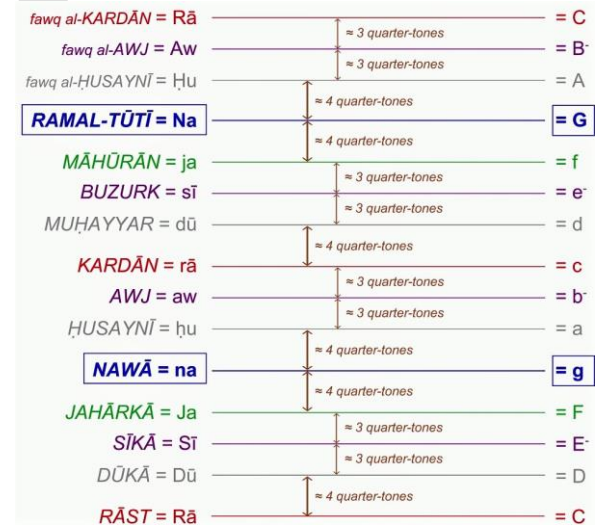


Fig. 19 Main two-octaves graphic – and theoretical – scale of *maqām* music implemented in the video-animated analysis – with intervals in multiples of a tempered quarter-tone. The names degrees of the scale (to the left) are equated to their solmization as explained in FHT 1.

The video features also the lyrics of the *qaṣīda* in original Arabic as a prequel to the analysis, with a simultaneous reproduction of the lyrics *and* of the transliteration during the analysis. (Fig. 20)



Fig. 20 Detail from one frame of the video displaying the upper and lower stripes, with a near-three-octaves span in the former and a two-octaves span in the latter. The lower stripe features a graph of the intensity (in light maroon color) with complete literal indications on the course of the melody, the lyrics for this segment of the analysis, and the transliteration below.

Literal melodic analysis of Yā Nasīma-ṣ-Ṣabā performed (1927) by ‘Alī Maḥmūd (Voice) & Sāmī A-sh-Shawwā (Violin) – ODEON X 55 581/1

Preliminary definitions and conventions:

- Semi-tonal (tetrachords or scales): based on a division of the octave in 12 semi-tones – An over-simplified representation would be the equal-tempered Common scale of Western music.
- *Zalzalian*: based on the non-tempered use of the vertical melodic (musical) space; an over-simplified concept of *zalzalism* presents it as based on the quarter-tone division of the octave, with *zalzalian* intervals being odd multiples of a quarter-tone (mainly three-quarter-tones and five-quarter-tones intervals).
- Quarter-tone and semi-tone digital representation of scales: The Western “major” scale can be represented as the suite of 7 digits 2212221 in

multiples of the semi-tone, and 4424442 in multiples of the quarter-tone. In the semi-tonal representation, this corresponds to (for example) *c 2 d 2 e 1 f 2 g 2 a 2 b 1 c’* with the interleaved numbers corresponding to the intervals (represented by the number of semi-tones they contain) between the successive pitches of the scale. This corresponds to *c 4 d 4 e 2 f 4 g 4 a 4 b 2 c’* in the representation based on multiples of the quarter-tone – which is the one used below *and* in the video-analysis.

- The graphic scale in the video is based on the conventional quarter-tone division (half-flat and half-sharp accidentals) and features to the left (and in the intermediate column) the names of the degrees of the scale: as a reminder, the solmization is, for the main degrees of the scale of *maqām Rāst*: *rā = RĀST = c*, *dū = DŪKĀ = d*, *sī = SĪKĀ = e*, *ja = JAHĀRKĀ = f*, *na = NAWĀ = g*, *ḥu = ḤUSAYNĪ = a*, *aw = AWJ = b’* and *Rā = KIRDĀN = c’ (C)*.
- Pitches bordering intervals are connected with lower hyphen (*na ḥu*) while suites of pitches are either connected with (or separated by) a dash (*na-ḥu*, *na - ḥu*), or not connected (*na ḥu*).
- Time is indicated for the analysis in “Seconds of the analysis” or “s_a”, whenever the corresponding video-time would be indicated with “s_v”.
- *Maqām* names and tonic are in bold font: this allows to better differentiate *maqām(s)* from *ajnās* (*genē*) and tetrachords, and to quickly identify the tonic of each *maqām* in the case of a complex modulation.

In the analysis the various declinations of the *ḥijāz* tetrachord are not differentiated by their names (they are all called *ḥijāz*), but by their content (either 262, 253 or 352 in multiples of the quarter-tone): this happens because the mastery of these two performers in swapping different tetrachords and *maqām* scales – if not *maqām(s)* – far outweighs the confines of tradition, and of the traditional theory of *maqām* music. The same applies to the different versions of scales containing *ḥijāz* tetrachords, which are not differentiated in traditional theoretical descriptions; thus, *maqām Ḥijāz-Kār* may have an intervallic composition expressed as one of the suite s2624262 or 3524253, with the first one comprising two bordering symmetrical – and “semi-tonal” 262

hijāz tetrachords, while the second one contains two different – and differentiated one from another – *hijāz* tetrachords 352 and 253, which are, however, disposed symmetrically around the central one tone interval (“4”).

Furthermore, in this music and as is well-known to many readers and mostly in Arabian and *Sharqī*³⁹ music, different *maqām*(s) may use the same scale⁴⁰, sometimes on the same tonic and sometimes only in ascent when in descent for other *maqām*(s).⁴¹

This is the case for example for the modes ‘*Ajam-Ushayrān*’ 4424442 (which is originally on *b^b*) which, if the tonic swaps to *d*, becomes *maqām Kurd* 2444244 – provided that the melodic line reinforces the *d* as the tonic.⁴²

While the overall complexity of the modulations in Maḥmūd’s and Shawwā’s performance makes it even more difficult to follow – and to dissect – the *sayr-al-‘amal*, it is here necessary to give a few complementary explanations, mainly about the denominations of the *maqām*(s) in the literal analyses below.

PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION OF SCALES AND MODES

Firstly, I use the denomination ‘*Ajam-Ushayrān*’ and not ‘*Ajam*’ (without the caudal ‘*Ushayrān*’) as it is commonly known today (both in the Mashriq and in the Maghrib), for the (ascending) 4424442 scale (from this point on all interval are expressed as multiples of an approximate quarter-tone): there are a few reasons for this choice.

Originally, the scale of ‘*Ajam-Ushayrān*’ (Fig. 21) has *b^b* as a tonic, which easily transposes to the fifth *e^b*. While based on the near-unique use of ‘*ajam*’ tetrachords 442 – with the occasional use of a descending semi-tonal *hijāz* tetrachord 262, this scale is different in both its composition and tonic from the scale of *maqām ‘Ajam*

(Fig. 22) which starts on the tonic *d* with a *bayāt* 334 tetrachord, and does not use *e* descending *hijāz* variant as the former.



Fig. 21 The scale of *maqām ‘Ajam-Ushayrān*.⁴³



Fig. 22 The scale of *maqām ‘Ajam*.⁴⁴

Here not only does the tonic differ, but also the scale and the formulation of the *sayr-al-‘amal*, which makes it indispensable to differentiate the two *maqām*(s), and to name them properly, especially since traditional *maqām* theory does differentiate them.

Secondly, and about the difference between *maqām Sīkā* and *maqām Sīkā-Huzām*⁴⁵: While the scale of *maqām Sīkā* (as such) is the same as the scales of *maqām*(s) *Rāst* (on *c* = *RĀST*) and *Husaynī* (on *d* = *DŪKĀ*), with the successive ascending suite 3443343, but with a different tonic (*e* = *SĪKĀ* = *e* – one quarter-tone – see Fig. 23), the scale of *maqām Sīkā-Huzām* 3426243, while also having *e* = *SĪKĀ* as a tonic degree, includes a *hijāz* tetrachord (which can be the “tempered” version or 262 in multiples of the quarter-tone, or any of 352 and 253 – with a *zalzalian* five-quarter-tones central interval) on *g* = *NAWĀ* (Fig. 24).

The confusion between the two does take place in today’s *maqām* music,⁴⁶ whenever the denomination

³⁹ “Oriental” (where the sun rises), as opposed to other subdivisions in the realm of *maqām* music such as *Maghribī* (from the *Maghrib*, where the sun sets down). In Arabian music, these are the two main divisions (*maghribī* and *sharqī*) while other declinations exist in the music of the (Perso-) Arabian Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula, notwithstanding Turkish, Iranian and other subdivisions.

⁴⁰ The same phenomenon may occur for *genī* – such as *būsalīk* and *nahawand* which have the same theoretical composition (424 – or “minor” tetrachord – in multiples of the quarter-tone) but (1) may be formulated differently and (2) on different starting degrees of the scale (localized tonic of the *jins* or *genos*).

⁴¹ A major part of the Ph.D. thesis of the author [Beyhom, 2003] is dedicated to the recension of these *maqām*(s) and *ajnās* (plural of *jins* = *genos*).

⁴² This happens when Maḥmūd uses (see below) a modulation from *maqām ‘Ajam-Ushayrān* 4424442 on *e^b* to *maqām Kurd* 2444244 on *g*.

⁴³ [Erlanger, Kriaa, and 2018, قریعة, v. 5, p. 160].

⁴⁴ [Erlanger, Kriaa, and 2018, قریعة, v. 5, p. 262].

⁴⁵ Also known as *Sīkā-Khuzām* – or simply [*K*]huzām.

⁴⁶ See for an example the commentary on the *Seven Maqāmāt* performed by Al-Ghazālī in [Beyhom, 2018, p. 192]; note however

with Erlanger (*maqām Khuzām* – in Arabic in Fig. 24) does not even include the “*Sikā*” root.

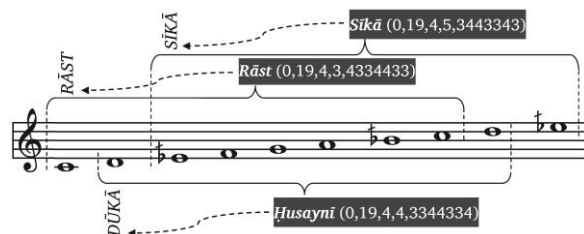


Fig. 23 Central part of the general scale of (Arabian) *maqām* music with the scales of *maqām Rāst* beginning with the degree *RĀST*, the scale of *maqām Husaynī* beginning with the degree *DŪKĀ*, and the scale of *maqām Sikā* beginning with the degree *SĪKĀ*.



Fig. 24 Scale of *maqām [K]Huzām*.⁴⁷

While this shows that much more research is still needed in order to clarify the theory of *maqām* music, it is nonetheless an incentive for researchers to try to be as precise as possible when analyzing this music, and use the most adequate denominations for a *maqām* fitting one scale or another.⁴⁸

GENERAL ANALYSIS

As aforementioned, this recording is among the most difficult to analyze, due to the mastery of both performers while undertaking multiple – and complex – modulations, combined to the very ample vibrato sometimes used by Maḥmūd.

Whenever the general “mood” of the performance can be described as evolving in and around *maqām Ḥijāz* (or “chromatic”) on *g*, the unwinding of the *sayr al-amal* (or “melodic progression”), while relying

mainly on *maqām ‘Ajām-Ushayrān* on *e*^b (or its brother-*maqām Kurd* on *g* for which the tonic changes, but the scale remains unchanged – with both being considered as having semi-tonal scales), it features also the three main variants of *genos ḥijāz* within the *maqām(s)* *Ḥijāz* and *Ḥijāz-Kār* scales, namely (in multiples of the quarter-tone) the “piano” *ḥijāz* 262 (successively semi-tone, one-tone-and-a-half, semi-tone), and the two *zalzalian* (i.e. based on odd multiples of the quarter-tone, i.e. not entirely semi-tonal) tetrachords *ḥijāz* 253 (successive semi-tone, five-quarter-tones and three-quarter-tones intervals) and its symmetric brother *ḥijāz* 352 (invert the preceding progression).

This whole set of tetrachords, scales and *maqām(s)* interacts constantly with the *zalzalian* *rāst* 433, *bayāt* 334 and *sikā* 34[4] tetrachords⁴⁹ – and with the corresponding *genē* and modes.

MORE DETAILED LITERAL ANALYSIS

The *qaṣīda* begins with *maqām Ḥijāz* 2624334 on *YĀKĀ* (lower *na* = *g*) for both performers (Maḥmūd then Shawwā) alternating melodic phrases until the *taslīm*⁵⁰ of Maḥmūd (to Shawwā) at 42 s_a (seconds of the analysis) after which Shawwā displays the complete descending then ascending scale of *maqām Rāst* on lower *Rā* = *C* with a hint to the scale of *maqām Ḥijāz-Kār* on *g* 2624262 centered on *c* and *d* (47-52 s_a). Note here that, while descending (around 44.2 s_a), Shawwā omits the degrees *aw* and *ḥu* and replaces them by an intermediate pitch, dividing in so doing the interval *rā-na* (*c.g*) in two approximately equal intervals. (Fig. 25)

that the performance of this cantor I destined to the YouTube platform, which necessitated probably an effort for the outreach of the audience and a simplification of the explanations about the *maqām(s)* in his performance, reduced to simple announcements of the latter: this applies even more when such an announcement is made in singing form.

⁴⁷ [Erlanger, Kriaa, and 2018, قريعة, v. 5, p. 320].

⁴⁸ An intelligent reform of the theories of *maqām* music is long overdue, but this will not happen anytime soon...

⁴⁹ Strictly speaking, *genos sikā* is based on the (trichordal) 34 core on *e*, which can be extended below to pentachord *rāst* c 43 [*e*] 34 (which incorporates tetrachord *sikā*) or in the ascending direction by following the general scale of *maqām* music (Fig. 23). It also

may be used suggesting a *Sikā-Huzām* (by inserting a *ḥijāz* tetrachord – or only the first interval of it – on *f*. Moreover, all these *genē* can be transposed to any intermediate pitch of the general scale: knowing that even experimented singers have a slight tendency to displace the general tonic pitch (the “diapason”) in the course of a performance – especially when modulating a lot –, this means that every *genos* can be virtually transposed to any position of the acoustical vertical space within the span of the performer’s voice. (See for example the commentary on Muḥammad al-Ghazālī’s performance of hi *Seven Maqāmāt* in [Beyhom, 2018, p. 197–201] and [Beyhom and CERMAA, 2018d].)

⁵⁰ “Handover”.



Fig. 25 Division by Sāmī a-sh-Shawwā of the interval *rā_na* (c_g) in two approximately equal intervals, at approximately 44.2 s.a. (Detail from a frame of the video at approx. 45.2 s.a.)

Back to *maqām Ḥijāz g* 2624334 at 53 s_a, Maḥmūd develops a long, ample melismatic phrase concluded on the tonic at approx. 76 s_a, emulated shortly by Shawwā from 77 to 85 s_a. Maḥmūd modulates then (86-91 s_a) to *maqām Sīkā on SĪKĀ* (*sī* = *e*) 3443343 reaching however (ascending) *Na* = *G* and stabilizing on the tonic *sī* (*e*), followed similarly by Shawwā (91-95 s_a), with a complete development of *maqām Sīkā* by Maḥmūd (97-107 s_a) followed by a variation in *maqām Sīkā-Huzām*⁵¹ *sī* (*e*) 3425343 by Shawwā (107-114 s_a).

At 115-132 s_a, and in a very interesting further variation, Maḥmūd modulates using an upper *genos bayāt G* 334 then a (lower) *rāst c* 433[4] embodying thus the descending scale of *maqām Yākā g* transposed on *c* 4334334 – or of *maqām Nayrūz-Rāst* on *c* – similarly reproduced (133-141 s_a) by Shawwā with, however, an initial insistence on *genos sīkā e* 34, which reinforces the modulation to come (by Maḥmūd). The next step of the *sayr-al-ʿamal* – of this particular performance of *maqām Ḥijāz* – is a general modulation by Maḥmūd (142-162 s_a) from *maqām Sīkā e* 3443343 to *maqām*

ʿAjam-ʿUshayrān e^b 4424442 [approx. equivalent to the scale of the “major” mode in Western music], initiated with a *genos ʿajam e^b* [2]44 (the first semi-tone is below *e^b*) and concluded with an instant modulation to *genos bayāt g* 433[4] at 161-162 s_a.⁵² Returning after a pause to *maqām ʿAjam-ʿUshayrān e^b* limited to *genos ʿajam e^b* 442 with Shawwā underlining (171-174 s_a) the third degree *Na* = *G*, Maḥmūd undertakes (174-192 s_a) to develop the scale of the *maqām* – still concluded (189-191 s_a) by *genos bayāt g* 433[4] –, similarly developed (191-205 s_a) and concluded (205-207 s_a) after him by Shawwā.

Maḥmūd initiates then a rather abrupt modulation (208-214 s_a) to the central *maqām* in this performance, *maqām Ḥijāz-Kār g* 3524253 with two *ḥijāz* tetrachords (352 and 253) symmetrically positioned around the *rā_dū* (c_d) interval while, after a similar phrase by Shawwā (214-219 s_a), performing a variation in the same *maqām* followed by a short pause and a new phrase in *maqām Ḥijāz-Kār g* 3524253 (227 s_a) masterfully turning, at 232 s_a, into *maqām ʿAjam-ʿUshayrān e^b* 4424442 descending to the lower *Ku* = *E^b* (240.5 s_a) then reaching the upper *Rā* = *C* (approx. 243 s_a) – with a near two-octaves span – and transforming there in *maqām Kurd g* 2444244 and concluding (250 s_a) this phrase on the tonic *g*. Shawwā repeats (251-258 s_a) the last phrase in *maqām Kurd* while Maḥmūd (259 s_a) returns to *maqām Ḥijāz-Kār g* 3524253 with (263 s_a) a similar response from Shawwā with two short question/answer (still in *maqām Ḥijāz-Kār g* 3524253) following (266-273 s_a) then, a slightly extended development by Maḥmūd (274-281 s_a) of *maqām Ḥijāz-Kār g* beautifully modulating, after a long *Na* = *G* note, to *maqām Ḥijāz-Kār d* 3524253 centered on the – equally central – interval *Na_Hu* = *G_A* with bordering semi-tones (282-285 s_a), nearly immediately imitated – with variants of intonation – by Shawwā (285-290 s_a). This *tour de force* is followed (290-296 s_a) by a further modulation by Maḥmūd to *maqām Bayāt* on *dū* = *d* with a repetition

awwā⁵¹ By replacing the central tetrachord *rāst* 433 on *g* with *ḥijāz* 253.

⁵² The modulation from *maqām Sīkā e* 3443343 to *maqām ʿAjam-ʿUshayrān e^b* 4424442 – a quarter-tone difference between the two

tonics – is but one example of Maḥmūd’s mastery of the art of *maqām* music.

by Shawwā (297-302 s_a), while Maḥmūd goes on developing *maqām Bayāt* from 303 to 317 s_a and concludes on *Na = G*.

After a short silence (with the cheering of one listener in the studio) Maḥmūd initiates (322 s_a) another modulation, beginning on the same note *Na = G*, to a *genos kurd dū = d* 244 which, before the end of a hint to the same *genos* by Shawwā (328-331 s_a), evolves into *maqām Kurd g* 2444244 (331-344 s_a).

The next phrase modulates from the outset (346 s_a) to *maqām Rāst c* 4334433 (end = 354 s_a) with Maḥmūd going back (357 s_a) to the structuring *maqām Hījāz-Kār g* 3524253 (end = 374 s_a). This is followed (378 s_a – Shawwā rests since 331 s_a) by a superb modulation to *maqām Rāst c* 4334433 (end at approx. 384 s_a) similarly initiated (384 s_a) from degree *sī = e* by Shawwā; another modulation (back) to *maqām Sīkā-Huzām sī (e)* 3425343 (390-394 s_a) similarly reproduced by Shawwā (394-397 s_a) disrupted (397-401 s_a) by a further modulation by Maḥmūd to *maqām Nawā-Athar c* 4262[262?], with a final phrase (402-414 s_a) beginning in *maqām Hījāz-Kār g* 3524253 and modulating (404.5 s_a) to *maqām Hījāz-Gharīb g* 2622624 with an intermediate *genos rāst c* 433 (410.5-411.5 s_a) superbly concluded (411.5-414 s_a) by *maqām Hījāz-Kār g*⁵³ 26242[62], a real display of mastery in *maqām* performance.

Some observations deduced from the combined Graphic/Video/Literal analysis

It happened to me, a few times, that students would ask, in the course of a seminar, “what can we learn from such an analysis?”. Naturally, analyses like this one for *Yā Nasīm a-ṣ-Ṣabā* take a considerable amount of time, and require for the most complex ones adapted – sometimes high-end – computer equipment and the use of multiple programs. This is however not always the case, as most graphic analyses with a program such as Praat can be quite easy and necessitate only limited equipment.⁵⁴

In a preceding article⁵⁵ I raised the question of the feasibility of graphic analyses of multi-instrumental /

voices music. While this performance is not strictly multi-part music (as the singer and the musician do not play together but – generally – one after another), the answer that was brought is an emergency solution and does not resolve the main question about the future feasibility of such a type of analyses.

What it shows, however, is that for important, historical recordings such as the one analyzed here, there is always a possibility of correctly analyzing the music, whatever technical difficulties (bad recording, ample vibrato, overlapping parts, etc.) may arise.

What should be understood, however, is that the procedure of editing and assembling the different components of a video-analysis – mainly the graph of the melody and the graphic scales – is in itself part of the analysis process. It also determines which techniques must be used to complete the analysis, as for the resolution of the question of the pitch of very ample vibratos such as sometimes performed by Maḥmūd.

ABOUT THE PERCEIVED PITCH OF THE VIBRATO OF ‘ALĪ MAḤMŪD IN *YĀ NASĪM A-Ṣ-ṢABĀ*

One example of a particularly challenging passage in Maḥmūd’s performance of *Yā Nasīm a-ṣ-Ṣabā* is the small section between 351 and 353 s_a with the melody rising above *Na (G)* and reaching *Rā (C)*.

The vibrato of Maḥmūd in this section evolves around 6.5 Hz and varies from less than one half-tone while reaching two whole tones around 352 s_a.

The question that arises is: “Is a vibrato of two tones still a vibrato or a yodel?”.

In the case of Maḥmūd, and in this performance, the vibrato may evolve continuously in extent and, while it fits partly the technical boundaries of vibrato (5.5-8 Hz and 0.6-2 semi-tones for singers),⁵⁶ a 4 semi-tones extent lies clearly outside these boundaries.

Can we conclude then that this technique is closer to yodel? Strictly speaking, Maḥmūd’s technique could be called a vibrato, if it is defined loosely as

“A [more or less] regular fluctuation of pitch or intensity (or both), either more or less pronounced and more or less rapid”.⁵⁷

⁵³ Another change from *e* to *e*^b.

⁵⁴ I wouldn’t be surprised if, sometime soon, such “light” analyses will be made using an “App” on a smartphone.

⁵⁵ [Beyhom, 2018, p. 205–206].

⁵⁶ According to [Timmers and Desain, 2000].

⁵⁷ [Moens-Haenen, 2001].

As for yodel:

“the following features are generally understood under ‘yodeling’: 1) singing without text or words, in which the play of timbres and harmonics is emphasized in the succession of individual, nonsensical vocal-consonant connections (such as ‘johol-di-o-u-ri-a’), which are also 2) connected in a creative way with the technique of continuous change of register between the chest voice and the (supported or non-supported) falsetto (or head) voice. 3) The tones, often performed in relatively large intervallic leaps, are either connected to one another in a legato fashion during the continuous change of register (register break), or are additionally broken up in traditional styles with the use of glottal stops”.⁵⁸

As a result, it is difficult to include Maḥmūd’s technique in the category “yodel”.⁵⁹

As for “falsetto”:

“The alto or higher range available to most adult male singers through a technique whereby the vocal folds vibrate/undulate in a length shorter than usual, known as the second mode of phonation. Falsetto is usually associated exclusively with the male voice, though it is available to and employed in that of the female. This phonatory mode has been equated with ‘unnatural’ as opposed to ‘natural’ (partly through misleading philological usage) even though falsetto can be achieved and employed by almost everyone at will. Therefore, the correct term, second-mode phonation (or pure ‘head’-register) is preferred here to ‘falsetto’”,

the problem lies also with the definition as Maḥmūd’s technique uses the upper range as well as the medium or low ranges (Fig. 27) in a near-continuous, varying mostly in extent while regular in its repetition, vibrato – definitely.

Now that this technique seems to have received a correct definition, the question that remains is: “What would be the perceived pitch in this particular example of near-continuous and varying vibrato?”.

While

“It seems likely that [...] string performers generally vibrate equally above and below the intended pitch and listeners perceive the intended pitch of the string performer near the mean of the vibrato”⁶⁰,

other choices can be made by the ear, as

“Galamian (1962)⁶¹ suggested that string vibrato oscillates from the pitch and below, otherwise the intonation will be perceived as sharp”.⁶²

In this particular case, we had to listen – *in fine* – to this passage at third the original speed of the available recording (with preserved pitch)⁶³ before deciding that it was the ridge line of the fluctuating pitches (Fig. 26) which determined the perceived pitch – and the corresponding scale and *genos*, at least at this speed.⁶⁴

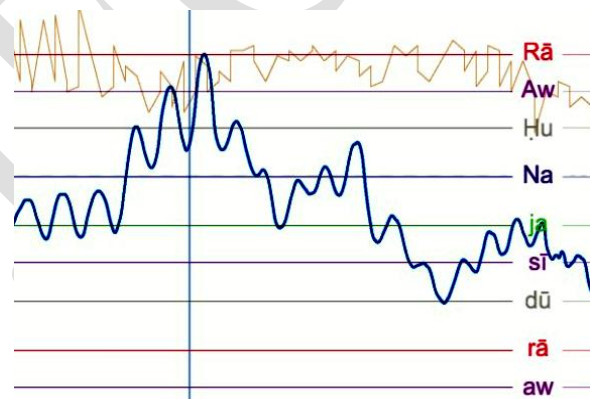


Fig. 26 Detail from a frame of the video, showing a *genos rāst* 433 on *Na* at approx. 352 s_a, underlined by the ridge line (upper utmost high pitches in the fluctuating graph line).

Further research and analyses are clearly necessary to determine if this vibrato below the pitch is particular to Islamic chanting, or to *maqām* music in general, and if the pronunciation and enunciation of particular syllables or letters may influence this perception.

What is today sure, however, is that statistic analysis of pitch perception of vibrato – and of other characteristics of music – may fail where a thorough and detailed

⁵⁸ [Baumann, 2001].

⁵⁹ This definition of “yodel” is debated, notably in [Wise, 2007].

⁶⁰ [Geringer, MacLeod, and Allen, 2010, p. 360]

⁶¹ And others, quoted in the same article.

⁶² [Geringer, MacLeod, and Allen, 2010, p. 352]; cf. “INTONATION OF THE VIBRATO. It is important that the vibrato always go to the flatted side of the pitch. The ear catches far more readily the highest pitch sounded, and a vibrato that goes as much above pitch as below makes the general intonation sound too sharp” – about the “Finger vibrato” in [Ivan Galamian, 1962, p. 42].

⁶³ An extract between 345-354 s-a of the original video-analysis is proposed in third-tempo on the site of NEMO-Online ****.

⁶⁴ It is possible that the poor condition of this particular audio recording influenced the hearing perception of the three musicians and musicologist who took part in this analysis. However, it is mostly the fast flow of Maḥmūd in some sections, combined with his vibrato technique, which does not help the perception of pitches. Further research on this subject with well-made audio recordings is a necessity, but is unfortunately impossible, today, for this performer.

graphic analysis may give conclusive results in a particular analysis of a performance.

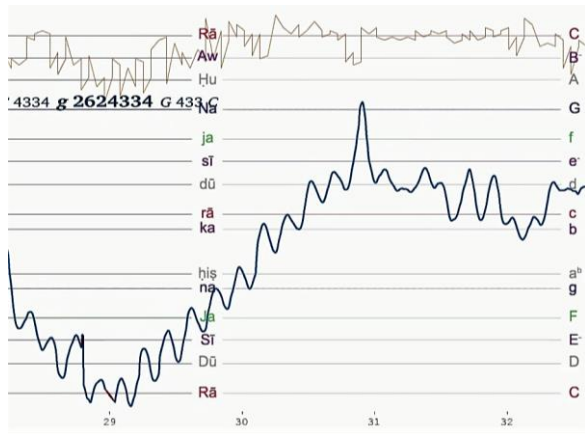


Fig. 27 Detail from a frame of the video, showing the technique of continuous, varying vibrato of Maḥmūd in the low and mid-ranges.

CONCLUSIONS

The VIAMAP⁶⁵ started in 2017 as a tentative response to classical music notation. It aimed at showing that *maqām* – and other – music can be better explained and analyzed by techniques extensively used in the 1950s and 1960s by eminent ethnomusicologists such as Charles Seeger.

Recent video-analyses produced at the CERMAA tend to confirm this point of view, with new techniques added gradually in order to better understand the analyzed music.

In this particular analysis of *Yā Nasīm a-ṣ-Ṣabā* performed by ‘Alī Maḥmūd and violinist Sāmī a-sh-Shawwā, some new techniques were used to remedy the problem that arises with old historical recordings – which are of the utmost importance for the understanding of the evolution of *maqām* music in the previous century – and with the virtuosity of the performers with changes of scales and *maqām(s)*, and with nearly instantaneous executions of a *genos* or a melodic phrase.

All these techniques are today available to ethnomusicologists, notably in the area of *maqām* studies and research. Knowing that there are hundreds of recordings available and still not analyzed in full as with this recording, the domain of graphic – and video – analysis of pitch can probably hope for a bright future and a continuous development of its techniques.

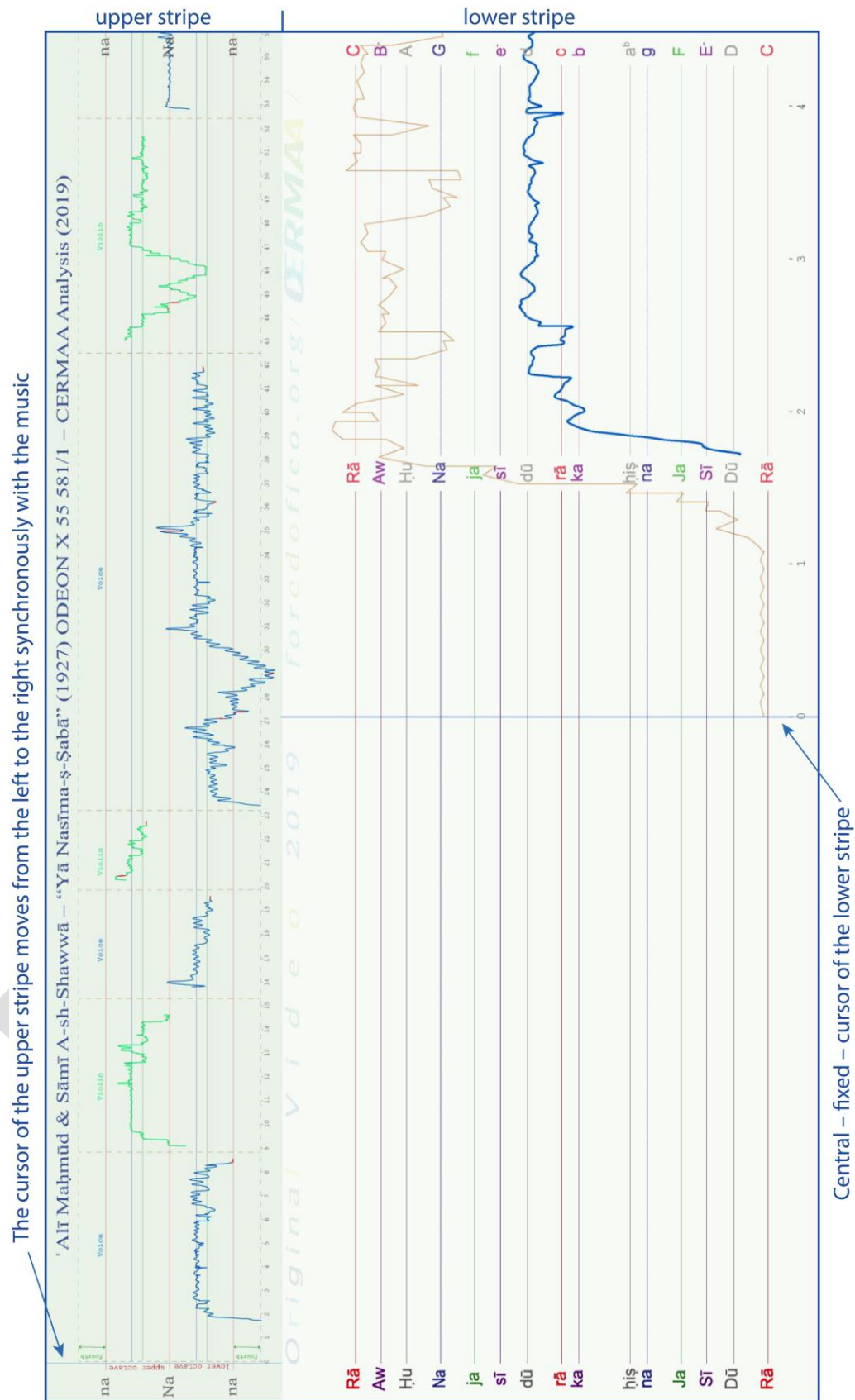
This is, at least, what the team of the CERMAA hopes to achieve in the next decades.

* * *

⁶⁵ The Video-Animated Music Analysis Project. (See [Beyhom, 2018].)

[illegible]

21



FHT 2 General disposition of the elements of the video-analysis – here at 0 s.a.

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